

# **Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum**

**Tucson**

**May 3, 2005**

## **Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession**

### **What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?**

- \$50 paid to employees who bring in referrals with additional \$50 if people survived training
- El Conquistador we offer transportation, which is the challenge for many employees, but we still need more
- Housing, look at Vail and Aspen (affordable housing near resorts is not available, so subsidize housing)
- Distinguish self by offering benefits—benefits package with meals for families
- Lots of referrals and networking
- Traditional advertising is more expensive
- Newspaper is last resort
- Community demands (apprenticeships, culinary, etc.)

### **What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit management employees?**

- Web (H careers, Monster)
- Word of mouth or internal promotions
- Test employees that touch customer, they need to pass certain requirements (IVR training)
- National organizations used to find management personnel
- Relocation costs paid for high-level positions

### **Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?**

- A good work environment—communication but also respectful workplaces and people skills
- This goes to guests—employees don't want to be mistreated
- Intrinsic transient employee; no threat of job loss and no job loyalty (college workforce)
- Lack of work ethic and loyalty (created by employer)
- My organization is made up of managers of organizations and finds that employees have to deal with a constant change of leadership
- It's physical work/labor

### **What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?**

- We try to go to schools and do PR work. You have to love this work. Encourage students to try this career
- Industry organizations sponsoring career days at high schools
- Time spent with employees is important. We need to train properly and groom, but we get too busy
- Managers take employees under their wing and pay attention to their needs and show them that they matter. It's about that personal connection. Value your current employees
- Staff is mainly older women and it's hard to recruit young people. It's "not their thing"
- Young people gravitate to jobs we understand. Entertainment end has no problem
- Inform kids about jobs you don't see—design menus, repairs, etc.—the non-traditional jobs
- Older people enjoy and understand their jobs and the industry

### **How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?**

- Our hotel positions are posted across our organization so anyone interested can apply.
- We have education refunds
- It's hard to find people that want to work at the airport. There's not much upward movement, no room for that. Employees have asked for these
- Cross-training is always successful but it takes lots of time and money
- Promote from within
- Restaurant industries don't have lots of money and we look for people who do well at entry-level jobs
- Lots of mom and pop shops

### **Are there jobs that a guest worker program would be especially well-suited to fill?**

- YES! Many positions, entry level and management positions
- If someone has good English and some computer skills, then by all means, we'll hire them for front desk
- Lots of openings exist, demand for labor this would meet a need
- Many guest workers have great work ethic
- Eastern Europeans would be great—we don't attach the same stigma to those people
- Large operations vs. small organizations maybe a clearinghouse

- We are reliant on tourism. We need culturally diverse people
- Housekeeping, banquets, dishwashers, catering services
- Nearly all parts of tourism business could use a guest worker program
- We need people that understand languages other than English

## **Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends**

### **How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?**

- Customers are more demanding. They expect more and better services so we need employees who can identify these needs
- Facilities are focusing differently. There's a lot of local travelers—families and their needs—resorts are finding their niches, which raise expectations. Need employees that can handle kids
- Changing market focus
- Customer demands are increasing. They are more discriminating on how they use their money, therefore we need more training—frontline customer service training
- How do mom and pop shops survive this?
- Need to provide a lot of detail in services
- Management should support employees in client/customer squabbles
- Increased concern with security—what is training with staff with different
- Interpersonal relationship is huge problem everywhere

### **What other social trends (cultural, environmental, political, economic, demographic, etc.) do you anticipate impacting your industry?**

- This is truly an international business, more global than ever
- Language and communication is an issue
- Terrorism and safety issues
- People are asking about community support of needs
- Restaurants compete within community and need community for support, it's hard to get that
- Looking at how to change distribution of tickets
- Boomers are both customers and employees
- Dietary changes and seating. Restaurant jobs are physically demanding—that's a tough call for older people
- Traveling public is getting older
- Employee base is getting older, and challenges exist with that

### **What new jobs are emerging in your company or industry?**

- Diversifying—offering more opportunities
- Technology, in-house and outsourcing. It is increasing with restaurants
- The data management—collecting and interpreting data
- Premium opportunities—increase service to meet customer needs—hospitality suites
- More “comfort” related demands from clients...roles to take care of clients better
- Loyalty programs
- Customer retention or ombudsman, tech plays a significant role
- Every large facility requires a spa, the need is huge
- Every industry needs a concierge

### **Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?**

- I see no shrinkage, titles and responsibilities
- Sales may decrease—more technology
- Baristas are few, but technology's replaced it. Specialty jobs that require special skills that are not being passed down
- We still need to operate equipment, but I do foresee a change of skills
- Produce is now chopped, so that job within a kitchen is not needed, it goes through the supplier; more centralized processes, minimize the times you touch things
- A lot has to do with safety
- Can't phase out people—it's labor-intensive, so we won't see much change. Skills will change, but the need will not. We will probably see labor reductions, but not too many
- People want human interaction
- Comment: WalMart is doing this RFID, Radio Frequency ID to track who you are and times you come through the parking lot

### **What impact will aging of workforce have on staffing in your industry?**

- I love older workers, they are so dependable

- Current challenge is health care and whether it is offered. This will increase costs and affect the ability to offer it as a benefit
- Older employees are more stable and reliable and become the eyes and ears of organizations
- Volunteers cannot be forced to come to work
- Older workers can be mentors to younger employees
- Older people will love part time

#### **What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?**

- Work ethic is the issue, it's better in older workers—mediocre is not OK
- Have older workers teach and train the younger ones
- Teaching responsibility to younger workers
- Younger people can help older workers get over the fear of technology
- Engaged as employees and customers
- Need consistency of treatment so that everyone works for the same goal
- I see a positive interaction
- You can mentor older employees or shows like Mötley Crüe
- Fear of technology

### **Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training**

#### **What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?**

- In-house training in various aspects of their job: Expansion of new restaurants to avoid losing charm we give training on food and history of restaurant and city and procedural training
- Industry training seminars and conventions: Safety, food handling for everyone on staff, plus 4x per year staff member goes through 8-hr course on customer service; internal issues, interpersonal relations, etc.
- Tapes, trade shows are a challenge for small companies
- Get people communicating
- As a state park, all volunteers are required to take an ethics course
- Local and state associations putting training sessions together
- Smaller companies cannot afford their own training
- Some training is available online

#### **What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?**

- We work with professional organizations and trade groups and train through that
- We do job shadowing, bring junior high and high school students to us to show day-to-day; Ground Hog Day
- Nine high schools have [access to] culinary in Pima County, the challenge is finding mentors
- Labor is so intense, can't afford to bring kids in—even mentorships are expensive
- We have two-week externships for teachers
- We're educating for jobs and teachers that don't have experience
- People want training for applicants, clothing, workplace expectations
- Job fairs and career development programs at high schools
- Need more mentors

#### **What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?**

- Eventually we fill jobs but getting skills is right
- Lots related to the fact that students aren't prepared to do easy things like filling out applications, dress, speaking, gum chewing...they act like we owe them something
- Goes back to work ethic
- Language barriers is huge
- First point-of-contact people need more training in tourism and hospitality, still shy on basics
- Concierge book to get info to tourists
- Community training and information, basic knowledge of tourism and community events
- Cross-selling

#### **What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?**

- No gum chewing, eye contact, people aren't service-oriented, work ethic, people skills, manners, speaking properly, being friendly
- Serving others, we need to teach kids
- Parents aren't educating kids, so it becomes a manager's responsibility
- Our laws don't allow us to train kids, can't do simple work like mow lawns, etc.

- Internships in high school would be invaluable
- Lots of street kids and no parenting
- Workplace expectations
- Teach basic life skills

**What can be done to help aging members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?**

- It's constant training—lots of people don't want to change, we need them to grow with us by informing them and engaging them in the business
- Communication with all workers on why things are changing, don't hide things
- Restructure job opportunities, give flexibility
- Consistency with staff, we have a “basic of the day” where each department at shift change goes over a basic skill for the day
- Ask for ideas and implement good ones
- Address their fears
- Retrain as necessary

**How will technology affect your staff training and development capacity?**

- We have to use technology, otherwise competition will bury you. People are more receptive to it
- It increases our access to training just need to get people to access it
- If you're not using technology nowadays, you won't get the properly skilled people. People always want tech support. Can't hire good people without the right support
- Colleges need to step up on that tech training in HRM programs
- Literacy issues are parallel to technology needs
- Will give you better quality employees
- You can provide better service with better technology